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God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

1 Peter 2.

(2015)

The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises

But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

Teach it, don't demand it.

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1 Peter 2.

INTRODUCTION: during Peter's generation the readers of this first letter of his were confused and discouraged by the persecution they were encountering because of their faith. Peter exhorted them to stand strong, repeatedly reminding them of Christ's example, the riches of their inheritance in him, and the hope of his returning again to resurrect them to eternal glory. He explained how Christians should respond when they suffer because of their beliefs. Peter is called, the "apostle of hope." His primary message is to trust the Lord, live obediently no matter your circumstances, and keep your hope fixed on God's ultimate promise of deliverance. Suffering is to be expected, but it is temporary and yields great blessings for those who remain steadfast. Peter wrote this letter in the mid-60s A.D.

Topics.

- Long for the spiritual milk, that you may grow up to salvation.
- A living Stone rejected by men, but in God's sight chosen and precious.
- You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation.
- Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution.
- Live as people who are free, not using your freedom for evil.
- He bore our sins in his body.
- By his wounds/stripes you have been healed.

The Previous Chapter: in the previous chapter Peter spoke to the elect exiles of the dispersion; of being born again through the resurrection of Christ; a living hope; the, the resurrection of Jesus from the dead; an inheritance kept in heaven; of being guarded through faith and of faith being tested. He talked of the Spirit of Christ that was in Old Testament prophets, of things angels longed to look into and the grace to be brought at the revelation of Jesus. He spoke of God judging according to each one's deeds, of the futile ways inherited from the forefathers, of a Lamb without blemish, of Christ being known before the foundation of the world, of being born again and the word of the Lord remaining forever.

NOTE: for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

Long for the Spiritual Milk, that you May Grow up to Salvation.

1 Peter 2:1-3 ----- ¹So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. ²Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up to salvation ³if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

The word, 'So' links us back to the end of the previous chapter where James told his readers to "Love one another earnestly from a pure heart, because they have been born again through the living and abiding word of God (1 Peter 1:22-25).

Now Peter is telling all who have tasted that the Lord is good how to love one another.

Firstly: they are to put away the following: -

- All malice; hatred, spite, meanness and nastiness.

- All deceit and hypocrisy (meaning don't pretend to be more spiritual or more righteous than we are be honest and our authentic and true-self and not put on another personality when we are with other Christians to appear more holy or religious than we really are).
- All envy jealousy, bitterness, resentment, covetousness and greed.
- All slander (i.e., stop gossiping, backbiting, demeaning and degrading others).

Secondly: Peter likens all who have tasted that the Lord is good to newborn infants who long to drink of their mother's milk. This is a perfect depiction of the passion and desire those who have tasted that the Lord is good should have. Since all newborns will scream and cry until they get the milk they crave. Peter is telling us that this is the heart attitude we should have toward growing spiritually in Christ.

Long for the pure spiritual milk; the pure spiritual milk in this context is not doctrine, but putting away all attitudes that would cause strife, contention, discord and division amongst brothers and sisters in Christ. Growing up to salvation (v2) is about growing in the fruits of the Spirit (i.e., love, compassion, kindness, mercy, grace and forgiving one another).

Paul: when speaking to the Corinthian brothers and sisters said: -

- He could not address them as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ and therefore fed them with milk, not solid food because they were still of the flesh, because there was jealousy and strife among them since they were behaving only in a merely human way (1 Cor. 3:1-3).

Paul clearly shows that pure spiritual milk refers to being humble and living in the fruits of the Spirit, (i.e., love, compassion, kindness, mercy, grace etc.), and being always ready to forgive.

A Living Stone Rejected by Men, but in God's Sight Chosen and Precious.

1 Peter 2:4-5 ----- ⁴As you come to him a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, ⁵you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

The words, "As you come to him a living stone" (v4) are an allusion to the following words of Isaiah: -

- Thus says the LORD God, 'Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation: 'Whoever believes will not be in haste (Isaiah 28:16).

There is also an allusion to the following words of David: -

- The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone (Psalm 118:22).

The reference is to Christ as the foundation on which the church is being raised upon. Jesus occupies the same place in regard to the church which a foundation-stone does to the structure that it is built upon.

A living stone: the phrase living stone refers to the following two things: -

1. To Jesus being alive from the dead, to become the spiritual foundation stone with believers as the building being erected upon it.
2. To a spiritual temple made up of living materials (i.e., redeemed brothers and sisters precious in God's sight and in who God now resides).

Christ, as a living stone sustains all who are joined to him with his living power and bonds them together with himself and with each other in love. The phrase living stone is in contrast to the temple made up of precious gold and costly stones at Jerusalem that the Jews accounted their highest glory.

They not only left Jesus out of the building, but laid their own foundation of works and self- righteousness. It was on this sandy foundation they built themselves, and taught others to do the same teaching that it was not in the living stone they would find life, but in the killing letter of the law and among their dead works (i.e., strictly adhering to ceremonial rites, religious customs and traditions etc., to earn righteousness that leads to eternal life).

Rejected by men: Jesus was rejected as the Messiah the Christ by the Jewish builders (the high priests, scribes, and Pharisees), and the majority of the population of Israel refused to accept him as the foundation stone of God's Kingdom. Even in this present age Christ is rejected, not only by the Jews, the Turks, and the majority of the Western world, but by all who confess to be Christians, but hope to be saved by their own works. Here is the wonder, beauty and glory of the Bible thousands of years ago the prophets proclaimed; -

- He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not (Isaiah 53:3).
- The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone (Psalm 118:22).
- Peter wrote, "This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone" (Acts 4:11).
- Jesus said, "Have you never read in the Scriptures, the stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?" (Matt. 21:42).

NOTE: Peter is not the Rock/Stone the Church is being Built Upon.

Based upon the following words of Jesus "I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it (Matt. 16:18) the Roman Catholic Church has claimed that Christ is building his church upon Peter. This is another perfect example of how false doctrine is established when a verse is isolated and lifted out of context.

In the two verses prior to this Jesus asks: -

- Who do you say that I am?

Then Peter replied: -

- You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.

And Jesus answered him: -

- Blessed are you, Peter because flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven (Matt. 16:15-17)

Then Jesus told Peter that upon this rock he will build his church. Peter's revelation that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God" is the rock that Jesus is building his church upon. Peter's following words show that there was no-doubt in his mind that he understood what Jesus was saying and who the rock was, since Peter himself says that Jesus is: -

- A living *stone* in the sight of God chosen and precious (v4).

And in the book of Acts when Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit he said: -

- This Jesus is the *stone* that was rejected by you (the rulers and elders of Israel) the builders, which has become the *cornerstone* and there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved (Acts 4:11-12).

These verses clearly show us the following two things: -

- Peter never for a moment considered that he was the stone Jesus was building his church upon.
- Peter knew without any doubt the foundation stone upon which the church was to be built upon and upon which every believer is laid is God's Son the Lord Jesus Christ.

Behold, I am Laying in Zion a Stone, a Cornerstone Chosen and Precious.

1 Peter 2:6-8 ----- ⁶For it stands in Scripture: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame." ⁷So the honour is for you who believe but for those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone," ⁸and "A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense." They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

Zion: is the ancient Hebrew name of the eastern-most hill of the city of Jerusalem, lying between the Valley of Kidron and Tyropoeon valley known now as the Temple Mount. It is situated in the Old City. The earliest record of Zion is as a Jebusite stronghold which was captured about 1000 B.C., by King David, who made it the centre of the United Monarchy, and the nucleus of the City of David, as Jerusalem came to be known (2 Sam. 5:6-7).

As the site of the original repository of the Ark of the Covenant and, in the view of most modern scholars, of the temple, the hill became the centre of political and cultural life for the ancient Hebrews. The name came to signify the Holy Hill of God (Psalms 2:6).

Over time, the name Zion came to be used for the whole of Jerusalem (Isaiah 1:27) and Palestine; daughter of Zion is a term applied to the Jewish people. After the fall of Judaea (A.D.70), Zion became the symbol of the hope that the Jewish homeland in Palestine would eventually be restored. In the New Testament, the term denotes the heavenly city (Heb. 12:22) (Rev. 14:1).

In biblical times Zion was symbolic of the house or household of God and by extension it later became representative of the Jews and their religion. In Christian belief Zion was symbolic of the place where God lives and is worshipped on earth or in heaven.

Here are some of the most beautiful words of Scripture: -

- Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame (1 Pet. 2:6).

This is not only the foundation and revelation of all Scripture, but the eternal plan that God purposed in His divine and eternal mind before the foundation of the world began.

NOTICE.

Whoever believes in him will not be put to shame (v6) this means that no matter whether a person is born a descendant of Abraham, a Hebrew or Jew, or of any Gentile nation, or whether a person is noble or lowly, rich or poor, whoever you are if you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ you will not be put to shame, meaning you will be accepted to eternal life and everlasting glory when Christ returns in glory as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice joy and peace on earth.

The Stone the Builders Rejected has become the Cornerstone.

The builders in this context refer to the chief priests, the Pharisees and scribes they had the temple, the religious authority, the priesthood and the Scriptures and with these they were to build the Kingdom of God, but instead they rejected the

cornerstone that the entire structure of God is built upon and without a solid and sure cornerstone even an earthly building will eventually crumble as did the chief priests, the Pharisees and scribes religious kingdom when the armies of Rome brought to ruin the city of Jerusalem and destroyed the Jewish temple of God in 70 A.D.

The honour is for you who believe: (v7) means God's favour is toward all who build their lives on the cornerstone of God's Kingdom and not on those who trusted in the temple and the keeping of its religious ceremonial customs and traditions.

It is interesting to consider that the faith of the many Jews who had accepted Christ and saw the Jewish temple of God being destroyed would not have been spiritually affected since their faith was in a cornerstone that cannot be destroyed. This is the glory and beauty of building our lives on the Christ the perfect and sure cornerstone he is immortal and eternal and his Kingdom will never be destroyed.

The Stone the Builders Rejected has become the Cornerstone.

The words, "They stumble because they disobey the word" (v8) primarily refer to religious leaders during Christ's generation (the chief priests, Pharisees and scribes), but by extension it applies to anyone who refuses to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

They stumbled for two reasons: -

1. Because Jesus proclaimed he is the Son of God, the promised Messiah, the Christ and Saviour all the prophets spoke of and prophesied was to come,
2. They were driven by pride, ego and greed and not from a heart filled with grace and mercy toward the Lord's people. They were more interested in expanding their own religious empire than they were in following God's will and His ways and because of this Jesus was a threat to their control, their power, and their kingdom, thus the reason they had him murdered.

These are the two reasons why they stumbled and refused to accept their promised Messiah the Christ the Son of God the sure and perfect cornerstone of God's Kingdom.

They were destined to stumble: the following words, "As they were destined to do" (v8) are simply stunning, since they show that God in his eternal foreknowledge knew that this is exactly what those who rose up to be the religious rulers over the nation He had chosen to be a treasured people would do.

Even prior to Moses death the LORD said: -

- I know what they are inclined to do even today, before I have brought them into the land that I swore to give them. They will despise and forsake the LORD their God and break the covenant that they have made (Deut. 31:16-22).

God was so confident of Israel's rebellion that he had Moses write a song for all the following generations of Israel to sing to remind them of the covenant and of the LORD their God (the Song of Moses is in Deuteronomy 32).

Moses said to the people of Israel: -

- Even today while I am yet alive you have been rebellious against the LORD, how much more after my death! I know that after my death you will turn aside from the way that I have commanded you and provoke the LORD through the work of your hands (Deuteronomy 31:27-3029).

This is the wisdom and sovereignty of God that our mortal and finite minds cannot fully grasp, man's free will works within God's sovereign and eternal plan.

This is because God has eternal foreknowledge and why all those who belong to the Kingdom of Christ can confidently and joyfully sing the Song, "He's got the Whole World in His Hands."

You are a Chosen Race, a Royal Priesthood, a Holy Nation.

1 Peter 2:9 ----- ⁹But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Though Peter is writing to the exiled Jews scattered amongst Gentile nations these glorious and majestic words do not apply to the nation of Israel, but to all (Jews and Gentiles) who are by faith trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ for their righteousness and building their lives on the cornerstone of God's Kingdom.

We are Chosen: the words, "We are chosen" (v9) does not mean that God has predestined some to be chosen and others to be rejected. God in his eternal and divine mind predestined that His Son the Lord Jesus Christ would be the Saviour of mankind and that whoever believes in Christ would be accepted by God (i.e., chosen by God). No-one is predestined to be chosen or rejected, we all choose our own destiny and if we chose Christ God chooses us it is in this sense that we are chosen. Peter is saying that the race, nation or Kingdom of Christ is the race of people that God has chosen in contrast to all other races, nations or kingdoms on earth.

Jews and Gentiles become one new nation in Christ: to understand God's eternal promises made thousands of years ago it is important to know that the promised seed of the woman in (Genesis 3:14-15), the promised seed of Abraham and the promised seed of David is Christ and that all the eternal promises God made to Israel are now fulfilled in Christ and are therefore no longer limited to Israel only, but extend and embrace all those who belong to Christ.

This is because God is now creating one new nation in Christ made up of both Jew and Gentiles. (Gentiles are everyone who is not a Hebrew or Jew). This means that Jews and Gentiles become one new nation in Christ (also called a new man, a new creation, the church, the body of Christ and the Kingdom of God).

The Apostle Paul said: -

- Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision (Jews), which is made in the flesh by hands— ¹²remember that you (Gentiles) were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the *COMMONWEALTH OF ISRAEL* and *STRANGERS* to the *COVENANTS* of *PROMISE*, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you (Gentiles) who once were far off (from God) have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For he himself is our (Jews and Gentiles) peace, who has made us both *ONE* and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances, that he (Jesus) might create in himself *ONE NEW MAN* (or Nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles), so making peace, ¹⁶and might reconcile us (Jews and Gentiles) both to God in *ONE BODY* through the cross, thereby killing the hostility (between the Jews and Gentiles). ¹⁷And he (Jesus) came and preached peace to you (Gentiles) who were far off (from God) and peace to those who were near (Jews). ¹⁸For through him (Jesus) we both (Jews and Gentiles) have access in *ONE SPIRIT* to the Father. ¹⁹So then you (Gentiles) are *NO LONGER* strangers and aliens, but you are *FELLOW CITIZENS* with the *SAINTS* (the Jews) and members of the *HOUSEHOLD* of God, ²⁰built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone ²¹in whom the *WHOLE STRUCTURE* being joined together (Jews and Gentiles) grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²²In him you (Jews and Gentiles) also are being built together into a *DWELLING PLACE* for *GOD* by the Spirit (Ephes. 2:11-22)

Gentiles were separated from Christ, alienated from the, Commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus they have been brought to God by the blood of Christ. Jesus has made Jews and Gentiles both one by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances so that Jesus might create in himself one new man (nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles).

In Jesus both Jews and Gentiles are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. Christ is the head of this new nation and its Jewish and Gentile citizens are now equal in status before God since in Christ we are all brothers and sisters in the same eternal family that God is now establishing in the Lord Jesus Christ throughout all nations of the world. The practical application of what this means to those who belong to Christ is that all the future and eternal promises God made to Israel also apply to them. The book of Revelation states: -

- When Christ returns in glory every eye will see him, even those who pierced him and all the tribes of the earth (Rev. 1:7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that: -

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation (i.e., Jews and Gentiles) and he has made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Rev. 5:9-10).

This is the "Chosen race, the royal priesthood, and holy nation," Peter has in mind in verse nine.

This is the glory and wonder of the Christian Faith: Christ will return in spectacular and awesome power and glory as, King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16) to rule and reign from God's Holy city Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God's Holy Mountain) to establish God's Kingdom on earth during his glorious millennial reign.

In the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-5) the dead in Christ and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy City of God. Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth.

Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power. The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish.

The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce. All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's Name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God.

The book of Revelation states: -

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that: -

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

At the end of this glorious Kingdom age God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory.

For further information see titles: -

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

A people for His own possession: at this present time the Lord is seeking, “A people for his own possession” (v9), by love he is inviting into his eternal Kingdom whoever will come to him. Jesus said, “Greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life for his friends” (John 15:13). Jesus has not only shown upon the bloodstained cross how much he loves all who come to him and who belong to his family, but also calls them his friends.

We often think of how thrilled, joyful and excited we will be to see Jesus when he returns, but it should never be forgotten that he also will be overwhelmed with joy because of our faithfulness, endurance and affections as an earthly groom is when he sees his glorious bride approaching in radiant beauty and with overwhelming tears of joy takes her hand in marriage.

You may proclaim the excellences of him: the words, “That you may proclaim the excellences of him” (v9) shine a brilliant spotlight on the truth that whenever we share our faith or witness of the Lord to those who are outside of God’s Kingdom our testifying should be focused on the excellences of Christ and not upon on ourselves, but on the Good News of the Gospel and upon God’s love displayed to all through Christ on the bloodstained cross of Calvary and upon the love, grace and mercy that the Lord has for whoever we might be sharing our faith with.

Called out of darkness into His marvellous light: the word, darkness in the following verse, “Who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” (v9) refers to being in the world without spiritual, insight, life or understanding of God and His ways, plans and purposes contrasted to light which not only carries the idea of being full of spiritual insight and understanding of God’s ways, plans and purposes, but also being full of His Spirit and love and the Spirit and love of Christ.

The Lord Jesus Christ calls us out of the world through the Gospel message of salvation, this calling out is a spiritual calling out, not a literal one. Christians are not called to isolate themselves from the world by living in communes. Christ’s calling people out of the world is about the will, the heart and the mind. In the world our hearts and mind are focused solely on the temporal things of this world, we live to gratify self, ego, pride and greed etc.

Christ through the Good News of the Gospel and through love calls us out of this world and into God’s eternal Kingdom, the heart, mind and passions of those who respond in humble repentance to God’s invitation through Christ to enter into his Kingdom is changed from selfish passion to desiring to honour and seek after God and bring a good testimony to Lord Jesus Christ. It is not king-self seated on the throne of the heart any longer, but the King of kings and Lord of lords who sits as the exalted King on the throne of the heart. Self, pride, ego are not in the driving seat, but the Lord Jesus Christ.

Once you were Not a People, but now You are God's People.

1 Peter 2:10 ----- 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

This can apply to the following two groups of people: -

1. Prior to the exodus the people of Israel were not a nation, when they came out of Egypt (also called the house of bondage and used as a symbol of the world) a nation was birthed. All the people of Israel entered a covenant with God at the foot of Mount Sinai and became God's chosen nation and his treasured people. The LORD has always dealt with Israel differently to any other nation, He declared His word, statues and His rules to Israel (the LORD has not done this with any other nation).

They are children of Abraham the father of faith and because they are his offspring they were entrusted with the oracles of God and to them belongs the adoption, the glory and the covenants. God says he gave birth to Israel and carried them from the womb even to their old age (Isaiah 46:3-4). God loved them when they were a child, and refers to them as his son who he called out of Egypt. (Hosea 11:1). They were given the law, the worship and the promises, to them belong the patriarchs and from their race, came the Christ who is Lord over all that God created (Rom. 3:2) (Rom. 9:4-5, 7). Added to this; the LORD called Israel His treasured possession and the apple of the LORD'S eye, his allotted heritage and a people holy to Him.

(Exod. 19:5) (Deut. 7:6) (Deut. 14:2) (Deut. 26:18) (Deut. 32:9).

2. There is no-doubt Israel has been a unique nation, but God is now pouring His Spirit out on all flesh (i.e., Jews and Gentiles alike) which means the words, "Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people" (v10) can apply to the Gentile nations. Under the Old Covenant the Jews considered themselves the chosen and holy race with God and the Gentile nations as an unclean race without God. Certainly under Moses Law Israel was the focus of God, but now the focus has shifted to people of all races, nations and languages. Israel is no longer the favoured nation rather God's favour is now on all who by faith belong to the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ regardless of whether they are Jews or Gentiles.

The Earthly or Sensual Nature and the Higher Divine Nature.

1 Peter 2:11-12 ----- ¹¹Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. ¹²Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honourable, so that when they speak against you as evil doers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

Within every believer there are two natures: -

1. The lower nature also called the earthly and sensual nature. This nature is controlled by self, pride and ego it causes strife, contentions, quarrels fights and wars. It uses others to gratify its own sexual passions and oppresses those it rules over for its own selfish gain. It craves riches, wealth, fame, importance, power and has no time for God.
2. The higher nature also called the heavenly and divine nature. This nature is controlled by the Spirit of Christ, in contrast to the lower nature it desires always to be with God and considers the well-being of others it shows compassion, kindness, mercy and grace and is always ready to forgive.

Since the Jews had a bad testimony amongst the Gentiles Peter counsels the exiled Jews that are scattered amongst the Gentile nations to treat those they live amongst with respect, decency and do-good when able so that when people speak against the Jewish nation their respectful behaviour and good deeds will testify to their good character. This principle naturally applies to all Christians of every generation who live and work amongst unbelievers so that by their respectful behaviour and good deeds they will bring a good testimony to Christ and the Christian faith.

Be subject for the Lord's sake to Every Human Institution.

1 Peter 2:13-15 ----- ¹³Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, ¹⁴or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. ¹⁵For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people.

Since every brother and sister in Christ is a reflection of God and the Lord Jesus Christ on earth, both God's and Christ's reputation is dependent on ours. We can be either a good reflection or a bad reflection. This is why it is the will of God for all believers to be subject to every human institution.

We are not to be the cause of troubles, unruly riots or fights, but rather become known as people of peace so that by obeying and doing-good those who do not believe will have nothing to say against God's people and therefore nothing to say against God or the Lord Jesus Christ since we are their reflection on earth and their reputation is dependent on our reputation.

NOTICE: Peter qualifies who these rulers are that we are to be subject ourselves to by telling us that their ministry is to punish evil and reward good, which means we are not to subject ourselves to rulers who would call us to act against justice or do evil or harm to others.

Live as People who are Free, not using your Freedom for Evil.

1 Peter 2:16-17 ----- ¹⁶Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. ¹⁷Honour everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the emperor.

Some wonder how to find the will of God for their life, here is the best answer; simply read these words of Peter over and over again until they are deeply engraved on the mind and in the heart. Though we are all saved by grace and by it set free from the condemnation of the laws judgment. No brother or sister in Christ is to use the freedom they have in grace as an excuse to cover over wrong doing.

God's will for all who belong to the family of Christ is to live as faithful servants of God. This means we are not only to honour and respect those with great authority and the lowly, but also those who do not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and we are to love our brothers and sisters in the faith.

Servants, be Subject to your Masters the Good and the Unjust.

1 Peter 2:18-19 ----- ¹⁸Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. ¹⁹For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly.

The will of God for Christian servants and by extension employees is to be subject to their master or their bosses even if they are being oppressed or treated unjustly, but this does not mean that they should not find lawful and peaceful ways to change their circumstances if possible. The thought here is that should we be in circumstances that we cannot change we should accept the unjustness of it and act graciously rather than in resentment, bitterness or hatred.

If you endure Unjust Suffering, it is a Gracious thing in the Sight of God.

1 Peter 2:20-21 ----- ²⁰For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. ²¹For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.

The idea behind these verses is that when we are in circumstances that we cannot change and therefore have to endure because we are under someone's authority who is treating us unjustly we are to do-good in contrast to speaking evil against them or causing strife, contention and fights. Since by enduring with a good attitude we are being a good testimony to God, the Lord Jesus Christ and the Christian faith since we are behaving in a manner that is totally opposite to the way in which a person of the world would respond to the same circumstances.

The words: -

- To this you have been called (v21).

Means that regardless of circumstances we are always called to respond from the fruits of the Spirit, It means no brother or sister is to repay unkindness with the same unkindness. Jesus is the perfect example of responding in love against the most brutal and cruel of circumstances.

When Roman soldiers came to the place called, "The Skull" were they crucified Jesus, he said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:33-34). Added to this Paul in his letter to the Romans tells us, "God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Rom 5:8). Jesus didn't die for us because we were worthy, but because God loved us even in our sin and Jesus showed his love toward us by surrendering his life to the most brutal of deaths, and this, "While we were still sinners."

Jesus Committed No Sin.

1 Peter 2:22-23 ----- ²²He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth.²³When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

Jesus was the perfect Lamb without blemish he could not be accused of any outward sin, or of speaking any words of deceit or dishonesty, added to this rather than threatening revenge and responding with malice against those mocking, beating and crucifying him he prayed as his darkest hour approached, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

He Bore Our Sins in His Body.

1 Peter 2:24 ----- ²⁴He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds (stripes in KJV) you have been healed.

Here is one of the wonders and glories of the Bible, the words of Peter in this verse immediately transcend the mind of the ardent Bible student at lightning speed to Isaiah chapter fifty-three written by the prophet thousands of years ago.

Isaiah wrote: -

- He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. (Isaiah 53:4).
- He poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors. (Isaiah 53:12).

The entire chapter talks of Jesus: -

- Growing up before God as a tender plant doing no violence or speaking any deceit.
- Being full of grief and sorrow himself and carrying our sorrow and grief's.
- Being despised, rejected and led as a Lamb to the slaughter.
- Being crucified for our transgressions with criminals and a rich man being involved in his death.
- Bearing the sin of many and healing us by his stripes.
- Making many to be counted righteous and making intercession for sinners

When it is considered that Isaiah prophesied these words thousands of years before Christ was even born no-one can deny that the inspiration of God's Spirit was flowing through Isaiah one of the greatest prophets of the Bible.

This is a simply breathtaking and awe-inspiring chapter that in majestic glory shows that as the finger of God's engraved the Ten Commandments on stone, likewise God's Spirit has inspired the words of the prophets that we have written and recorded in the Canon of the Bible today.

Now back to Peter's words: -

- He himself bore our sins in his body (v24).

Since sins cannot be transferred from one person to another these words of Peter and Isaiah cannot mean that Christ took upon himself the sins of people so that he became a sinner himself. To say that our sins were so imputed to him as if they had been his own and that his heavenly Father therefore beheld him as grossly blackened with imputed sin is monstrous and also denies the scriptural command that the Passover lamb had to be without blemish.

These words of Peter and Isaiah allude to his sufferings. The sufferings which he endured on the cross were such as if he had been guilty, meaning that he was treated as he would have been if he had been a sinner. He was treated as guilty, crucified as a criminal and endured the same kind of physical pain that the guilty do and passed through the same mental sorrow and anguish of mind as those who are guilty and punished for their own sins, Christ and innocent man suffered in all respects as the most-guilty do, he put himself in the place of sinners, and bore that which those sins deserved.

He was treated as if he had been a sinner, in order that we might be treated as if we had not sinned; that is, as if we were righteous. There is no other way in which we can conceive that one bears the sins of another. They cannot be literally transferred to another therefore all that can be meant is that he should take the consequences on himself, and suffer as if he had committed the transgressions himself.

The Blood of Bulls, Goats and Lambs and the Blood of Christ.

Christ death in the Old Testament was typified by an innocent animal being sacrificed on behalf of the sins of the guilty. Once a year the High Priest would take the blood of the innocent bulls, goats and lambs that had been sacrificed for the guilty before the Ark of the Covenant (the symbol of the very presence of God) with the cherubim (symbolising God's holy angels) in the Most Holy Place of the temple to make atonement for the sins of the people of Israel. In the same way Christ the sacrificial Lamb without blemish laid down his life, the innocent for the guilty and himself took his own blood to the heavenly Mercy Seat of the Holy Place in heaven in the midst of the angels of heaven and before the very throne of God in heaven: -

- To make atonement for our sins.
- To remove the punishment of death due because of sin.
- To provide a way of pardon and escape.
- To abolish the sin-offerings and put an end to the Mosaic Law and Levitical priesthood by his one offering of himself.

Christ the Lamb without blemish has laid down his life as a sacrificial sin offering for all and taken his sinless blood into the very throne room of God as a sin offering on behalf of us all. As the innocent bulls, goats and lambs without blemish were led to the slaughters knife on behalf of the guilty in the same manner Christ surrendered his life to be slaughtered on the Cross of Calvary to redeem the guilty from their sin.

- God by the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot has ransomed us from religious works (dead works) so that we would be believers in God, who raised Christ from the dead and gave him glory, so that our faith and hope are in God alone and not self-effort and the strict adherence to ceremonial rites, religious customs and traditions as Israel's fathers under the Old Covenant of the law practised (1 Peter 1:18-21).

As the Jewish high priest appeared before the Shekinah the divine presence in the Most Holy Place of the Tabernacle so Christ appears before God himself on our behalf in heaven to present the merits of his blood as a permanent reason why we should be saved (Rom. 8:34) (Heb. 7:25).

NOTE: though Isaiah words, "He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted" (Isaiah 53:4), can be seen as a picture of Christ suffering our sins, grief's and our sorrows during his

three and a half years of ministry (especially by the hands of his kinsmen the Jews who had him beaten and smitten (crucified) Peters focus is clearly upon Jesus suffering on the bloodstained cross of Calvary.

By His Wounds (Stripes in KJV), You have Been Healed.

The expression “By his wounds (stripes in KJV) you have been healed,” has been misunderstood by some today, based upon these prophetic words of Isaiah (Isaiah 53:4-6) there are a certain few ministers and pastors who proclaim that everyone who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ should be able to be fully healed no matter what their sickness, illness or disability maybe. They claim that providing a believer has enough faith they can claim (some say demand) from God a full and perfect healing.

The implication of this is of course that all who are not healed or suffering cancer, terminal illness, disabilities etc., are only suffering them because they do not have enough faith.

Generally these congregations are told if they learn certain keys of faith, they will be able to overcome their sickness, disease or disability. Those under this type of teaching are bound to such preachers; because they desperately desire to find these keys of faith that they might be healed and who can blame them? Should such keys of faith exist wouldn't we all not only desire them, but once obtained be healing all our suffering family members and friends and those who came to us as Jesus and the apostles healed the sick (no matter what they believed and who they were) out in the open public places they visited.

Now if this is not what Isaiah had in mind when he spoke the words, “By his stripes you have been healed,” what did he mean”. The best way to answer this question is to begin at the meaning of the word “stripes.” It comes from the Greek word (*molops*) and means black eye or blow-mark (i.e., the enraged and swollen marks of a blow; the marks we refer to when we use the expression “he was beaten black and blue” referring to wounds made from outraged anger by beating). Christ to redeem us from our faults allowed his enemies to scourged (whip) his body until it was black and blue with bruises and wounds and this all on account of our sins and not for his.

By his stripes you have been healed, means by Christ's own death in contrast to offering a bloody sacrifice as the Jews had been doing for over four-thousand years the Lord was himself the sacrifice and it is by his death and not the death of bulls, goats and lambs that we are healed.

Sin is a disease, a natural and hereditary one (inherited from our earthly father Adam). It can be likened to an epidemic virus that reaches to all people, and to all the powers and faculties of our minds, hearts, emotions and passions. It is a sickness that is not only nauseous and loathsome, but cannot be healed by anything that even our world's best medical scientists, doctors and surgeons can do. The end result of this sickness is death and the darkness of the grave never to rise again.

Christ is the only physician, and his blood is the only balm and sovereign medicine that has the power to cleanse from all sin. It is the forgiveness of sin, which is meant by the words, “By his stripes you have been healed,” it means we have been healed wholly healed from our sin. This is because the sting of death, which is sin, is taken away, and the strength of sin, which is the law, is dead to those who are in Christ. The healing the prophet Isaiah had in mind when he spoke the words, “By his stripes we are healed,” (Isaiah 53:4-5) was healing from our sin and healing from death to eternal life it is in this sense we have been healed by Christ's strips and wounds (i.e., his suffering and his death).

To be smitten by God: before time began God in His eternal mind and eternal foreknowledge not only planned and purposed that Jesus would be the central focus of His plan of Salvation for mankind, but also that Jesus would die for our sins that we may be saved by faith and by grace. In the book of John Jesus said, “God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16).

This was God's plan from the beginning. Some today may feel that because Christ did not appear during the Old Testament age, the faithful during those generations were saved solely by adhering to ceremonial rites, holy days and keeping religious customs and traditions, but this is not so. They were saved by having faith in the promised Messiah the Christ to come and not by works of the flesh or by self-effort, but because they by faith looked: -

- Toward the promised seed of the woman spoken of in Genesis. (Gen. 3:15).
- Toward the promised seed of Abraham. (Gen. 26:4) (Gal. 3:16).
- Toward the prophet Moses said was to come like him. (Deut. 18:15) (Acts 3:22) (Acts 7:37).
- Toward the Holy One to come (whose body God will not let see corruption in death) (Psalm 16:9-11).
- Toward the promised seed of David. (Psalm 89:4) (Psalm 132:11) (Jer. 23:5) (Matthew 1:1).
- Toward the Messiah the Christ all the Old Testament prophets and the Scriptures speak of such as (Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53). The Lord Jesus himself said, "I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book (Heb. 10:7) (the scroll of the book refers to the Scriptures).

Added to this even though Old Testament Israel offered animal sacrifices to God they were not saved by them, they were a type and shadow of Christ the Lamb of God without blemish the Saviour to come and it is his blood that cleanses them.

This is because the power of Christ's cleansing blood flows back to the foundation of the earth so that the faithful of the Old and New Testament are saved by the same Saviour and the same Redeemer. In the book of Revelations it is written: -

- All that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (Rev. 13:8).

And Peter wrote: -

- You were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot foreordained before the foundation of the world and manifest in these last times for you. (1 Peter 1:18-20).

These verses shine a brilliant spotlight on the truth that Jesus was not only the central focus of God's eternal mind and of His eternal plans and purposes for mankind's salvation and for eternity, but also the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

The cleansing power of Jesus blood shed on the cross of Calvary doesn't just cover and cleanse only those who have come to the Lord after his death and resurrection, but flows all the way back to the foundations of the earth to Adam and Eve like an invisible spiritual river cleansing all the faithful of the Old Testament from the fall of Adam onward who by faith looked to the coming and the appearing of the promised Messiah the Christ.

On the Tree.

The phrase, "On the tree" (v24) literally means on the wood meaning on the cross. The word tree here comes from the Greek word (xulon) which means timber and wood it can refer to a club, a stick, a staff or anything else made of wood. The same Greek word is used in the following verses: -

- The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree (xulon) (Acts 5:30).
- And when they had carried out all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree (xulon) and laid him in a tomb (Acts 13:29).

- Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree” (xulon) (Gal. 3:13).

Clearly the Greek word (xulon) (meaning a wooden thing) in the context of these verses refers to the cross since this was the common method of putting criminals to death during the Roman era and both history and many other Scriptures make it is very clear that Christ was crucified on a Cross.

Die to Sin and Live to Righteousness.

The words, “That we might die to sin and live to righteousness” (v24) carry the idea that we would be absent from the world, so that sin no longer influences us. In regard to sin we are to be as if we were dead so that it would have no more influence over us than if we were in our graves.

We are freed from sin, delivered from under its power to give the law the legal right to condemn us to condemnation and sentence us to eternal death; we are through faith in Christ wholly delivered both from the guilt and power of sin. For those in the family of Christ it is as though sin never was its damning power and influence has no power over us because in Christ we are entirely discharged from it and can never come into condemnation on account of it, and can never be eternally hurt or destroyed by it.

This is because the sting of death, which is sin, is taken away, and the strength of sin, which is the law, is dead to those who are in Christ. The death of Christ has totally set all those in the family of Christ free from the guilt of sin and the power of the law to condemn to eternal death.

Live to righteousness: the words, that we might live to righteousness (v24) brings the balance to our freedom from sin and the law’s condemnation. Christ literally died on the cross on account of our sins; that is he died for us, not for himself. The effect of perceiving this love that Christ has for us should lead us to see the gross horror of transgression and by seeing such horror and such great love lead us to live a new-life in Christ that brings honour to his heavenly Father and a good testimony to the man of sorrows, the Son of God who laid his life down for us.

- Christ’s righteousness should be our master now, as sin was before.

The death of bulls, goats and lambs had no power to transform the conscience, the mind or the heart. In contrast to this when a humble and repentant sinner perceives that Christ the Son of God has like a lamb to the slaughter laid his life down to a brutal, bloody and cruel death not for himself, but that they might be redeemed and made righteous before God and saved to the uttermost it deeply cuts the heart and they are brought to repentance.

Their passions, desires and motivations of the heart and the mind are infused with God’s Holy Spirit and their life is transformed in such a manner that they desire to live a new-life in Christ.

By His Wounds/Stripes you have Been Healed.

The words: -

- By his stripes you have been healed (v24) (cited from Isaiah 53:4-6).

The word stripes comes from the Greek word (molops) and means black eye or blow-mark (i.e., the enraged and swollen marks of a blow; the marks we refer to when we use the expression “he was beaten black and blue” referring to wounds made from outraged anger by beating). Christ to redeem us from our faults allowed his enemies to scourged (whip) his body until it was the black and blue with bruises and wounds and this all on account of our sins and not for his.

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Sin is a disease, a natural and hereditary one, an epidemic distemper that reaches to all people, and to all the powers and faculties of our minds, hearts, emotions and passions. It is a sickness that is not only nauseous and loathsome, but cannot be healed by anything that even our world's best medical scientists, doctors and surgeons can do.

Christ is the only physician, and his blood is the only balm and sovereign medicine that has the power to cleanse from all sin. It is the forgiveness of sin, which is meant by the words, "By his stripes you have been healed," it means we have been healed from our sin. This is because the sting of death, which is sin, is taken away, and the strength of sin, which is the law, is dead to those who are in Christ thus the healing is healing from death to eternal life it is in this sense we have been healed by Christ's strips and wounds (i.e., his suffering and his death).

The Shepherd and Overseer of your Souls.

1 Peter 2:25 ----- 25 For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

The ones who were going astray refers to the exiled Jews Peter is writing to, but by extension can apply to anyone who has gone astray since the Lord Jesus Christ is the Shepherd and overseer of the hearts and minds and the eternal destiny of us all. Jesus committed no sin neither did he respond with unkindness when he was verbally attacked and abused nor did he call for revenge on those who crucified him, but rather surrendered all judgment to his heavenly Father who judges all without favouritism.

Jesus trusted in God who would judge him justly likewise we are only to be concerned about being innocent before God and not concerned what man will do to us.

End